

## **FACT SHEET**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP 2006 INITIATIVES**

Hawai'i's natural beauty and unique flora and fauna have been entrusted to us to preserve and protect for future generations. The Lingle-Aiona Administration is proposing initiatives that help broaden our understanding of these precious resources, take proactive steps to preserve them, and ensure the maintenance of natural and cultural assets throughout the State.

#### **Environmental Programs**

The Administration is proposing to designate \$1 million in funds during FY 2007 to develop Environmental Education Centers on each island. The State will partner with private environmental entities, providing them with a grant-in-aid to set up and operate four centers, one per county. These centers would provide intense learning opportunities for both adults and youth, and extend the ability of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources to share its expertise and knowledge with the wider community.

The Administration is also proposing legislation to allow funds derived from activities in our forests to be deposited into a special Forest Stewardship Fund to help manage the State's forest reserves. This bill establishes as public policy that money derived from the harvest and sale of trees and forest products, ecotourism operations, sales of utility rights of way, cabin rentals, watershed operations, filming, and related activities should be used to maintain these forests. Currently only revenue from the sale of timber or seedlings is deposited in the fund.

#### **Preservation**

Habitat conservation agreements, safe harbor agreements, and incidental "take" licenses are arrangements between the State, the federal government, and private landowners that encourage these owners to use their property to conserve and protect endangered species. These arrangements were first enacted in 1997 and reenacted in 2001. A bill proposed by the Administration would remove the current sunset date of July 1, 2007 and make these arrangements permanent.

- To date, two habitat conservation plans and five safe harbor agreements have been issued under this State law.
- There are three more habitat conservation plans pending with the Department of Land and Natural Resources and at least one safe harbor agreement.
- Removing the sunset date gives public and private landowners a clear message that the State is committed to maintaining responsible solutions to conserving our endangered species.

The Lingle-Aiona Administration is concerned that current law makes it difficult to prosecute large-scale timber theft and related forest crimes because the fines are below the value of the material taken. To address this the Administration proposes:

- Establish administrative penalties as a faster alternative to prosecuting violations in the courts. The administrative penalties are \$2,500 for the first offense and \$5,000 for the second occurrence.

- Increase the general fine for the crime of “timber trespass” from \$1,000 to \$2,000.
- Add a fine of \$2,000 for each tree taken or destroyed and add a new fine of \$10,000 for each Koa tree illegally harvested or destroyed.

Coral reefs and ocean habitats can be damaged when an ocean going vessel runs aground. The longer the vessel is there, the more destruction occurs. The Administration is proposing legislation that would allow the State to promptly remove a grounded boat and charge the owner for the costs of doing so, when no other options are available.

It is important to facilitate the cleanup and reuse of contaminated property by providing a clear legal framework for enforcing “environmental covenants.” These covenants set forth the controls that must be observed for extended periods of time, in some cases in perpetuity. As property changes ownership, it is important that these controls be maintained.

- The Administration bill is modeled after the Uniform Environmental Covenants Act recommended by the National Commission of State Legislation.
- It creates a registry of all covenants in the State and allows tracking as ownership of the parcels change.
- The State Bureau of Conveyances will also be asked to record these covenants at the time title to the property changes hands.

The FY 2007 supplemental budget includes an additional \$2 million to continue ongoing improvements to the Molokaʻi Irrigation System. These monies will be in addition to the \$1,000,000 already approved for emergency repair of the electrical system for the pumps and repairs to the concrete flumes. The additional funds will help with upgrades to the access road and the mechanical system that runs the water distribution network.

Water is a precious commodity and the Lingle-Aiona Administration takes critical steps in its FY 2007 supplemental budget to curb water pollution and upgrade the quality of our drinking water. These include:

- Providing \$28.7 million in funds from the Drinking Water Treatment Loan Program. These monies will go to the counties for upgrades to the potable water systems.
- Providing \$38 million to the counties from the Water Pollution Control Loan Program to curb runoff and upgrade storm water drainage systems.
- \$10 million more to complete the upgrades to the Waimanalo Wastewater Treatment Plant on Oʻahu. This will allow the facility to operate at capacity and start the process for the turnover of this facility to the City and County of Honolulu.

### **Maintenance and Security**

Maintaining clean, well-landscaped parks and preserving our cultural sites benefits both our residents and visitors. The Lingle-Aiona Administration is again requesting \$10 million to improve parks throughout the State. Last year the Administration in the biennium budget asked for \$20 million to maintain our parks, but the Legislature only approved \$5 million.

Examples of how the additional funds would be used include completing the water system repairs at Koke`e, Wailoa Park in Hilo, and Waianapanapa; replacing the air conditioning system in `Iolani Palace; widening the roadway at Koke`e Park on Kaua`i; and upgrading comfort states in many locations.

Additionally, the Administration has requested \$486,000 to continue to power wash and sanitize State park restrooms on a semi-monthly basis. This program will be paid for out of the Parks Special Fund.

The Lingle-Aiona Administration is again requesting \$10 million to repair and upgrade State recreational boat harbors. Examples of what the Administration will do include improve the Hana boat ramp on Maui, rebuild the piers at Ala Wai Harbor on O`ahu, upgrade the utilities at Ala Wai, upgrade utilities at Keehi Harbor on Maui, repair the Haleiwa dock, and renovate shore structures at Wai`anae Harbor.

Policing parks and harbors at night helps curb illegal activities in these locations and encourages more people to use these facilities in the evening. A total of \$784,000 in additional funds in FY 2007 is requested for security patrols.